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# SOUTHERN FOLKLORE QUARTERLY

*A publication devoted to the historical and descriptive study of folklore and to the discussion of folk material as a living tradition*

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# Southern **folklore** Quarterly

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## THE COWBOY, THE KNIGHT, AND POPULAR TASTE\*

by Joseph J. Waldmeir

**H**ISTORICALLY SPEAKING, the Western hero as we know him today in movies, on radio and television, in comics and paperbacks was born about the time of the Civil War. His parents were the humorous and tragic folk tradition and the fictions of Beadle's Dime Novels; his grandfather was Natty Bumppo. He has changed a good deal since his birth, adapting himself to a changing environment which included the closing of the frontier, the bringing of law and order to the West, and the consequent passing from the scene of his real-life counterparts. The vestiges of woodsmanship which he inherited from Leatherstocking were first replaced by the plainsmanship of Buffalo Bill, and this in turn has been superseded by the slightly more sedentary cowboy existence.

But the change has been gradual, not drastic. "Most cowboy tales are hardly distinguishable from the Deadwood Dick and Buffalo Bill series," says Henry Nash Smith in *Virgin Land*: "The introduction of characters described as cowboys is little more than an effort to achieve an air of contemporaneity. It does not change the shape of Wild Western fiction."<sup>1</sup> In general, I would agree with this conclusion. Certainly his evolution from scout and Indian fighter to cowboy does not affect the legendary outlines of the Western hero, but the evolution of

\*A paper delivered before the Annual Meeting of the Michigan Folklore Society, March 23, 1957.

<sup>1</sup>Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land*, (Cambridge (Mass.), 1950), p. 111. See the whole chapter, "The Western Hero in the Dime Novel, pp. 90-111 for a detailed discussion of the progress of the western hero from Leatherstocking to Buffalo Bill. See also Albert Johannsen, *The House of Beadle and Adams* (Norman (Okla.), 1950); and for a working bibliography of any subject dealing with the Southwest, and not infrequently with the Northwest and Farwest as well, see J. Frank Dobie, *Life and Literature of the Southwest* (Dallas (Texas), 1952).

his environment has affected them considerably. The hero today is brave, honest, stoical, altruistic, humble, possessed of physical and mental prowess, skillful in woodsmanship or plainsmanship, skillful at marksmanship with rifle or pistol, and he is even frequently, celibate (though if not, he is faithfully betrothed or married, the next best thing to celibacy). But notice that today's Western hero possesses all of these characteristics, not—like the much-married Deadwood Dick for instance, who lusted after Calamity Jane through story after story—just a few of them. And notice too that he possesses them without having earned them. Merely by being placed on a horse and pointed out as hero by some such simple device as the color of his clothing, he is identifiable as hero. The closing of the frontier has made this possible. The West in which the hero was born and shaped, which gave him bones and blood, died coincidentally with the introduction of the cowboy hero into Wild Western fiction. It died, and became the place of perfection, and as it receded further into the past, the more believable, hence more useful to the fiction writer, became the traditions, legends, and myths which constituted its perfection.

A familiar procedure is in evidence here, of course. A legend, a myth, carefully nurtured by the folk ("From the time of Daniel Boone," Smith writes, "the popular imagination had constantly transformed the facts of the westward movement in accordance with the requirements of myth"<sup>2</sup>) is bequeathed by them through popular song and tale to the professional storytellers of later generations. These storytellers—such as, for instance, Dime Novelists like Edward L. Wheeler, Edward Z. C. Judson (Ned Buntline), and Prentiss Ingraham—capitalize on the legend, refine it, stylize it, make it "literary," and by intensive propagation entrench it firmly into the popular taste of the nation. From this point onward the myth or legend travels the downhill path toward decadence and oblivion on which the professional storytellers first put it. A vast army of nameless, faceless, (though hardly voiceless) scribblers have accepted the heritage of popular taste bequeathed them by the folk and the Dime Novelists, and with it they construct plot after plot and situation after situation for the movie and television

<sup>2</sup>Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 102. The words *folklore*, *myth*, *legend*, and *tradition* are used interchangeably by Dobie, Smith, Johannson, Lomax, Sandburg, and other writers about the song and story of the old West. They use the terms to describe stories or aspects of stories with a strong odor of the untrue about them. They seem little concerned with making distinctions among the terms on the basis of degree of audience belief, etc.

cameras, the radio microphone, and the comic page. They use popular taste to satisfy popular taste; they give sustenance to the heritage by letting it, like Hemingway's hyena, feed upon itself.

But with the death of the old West and the shift in emphasis from law creation to law enforcement in the stories, with the introduction of the cowboy hero, a new aliment began to nourish the old legends and myths. It is not strictly speaking, new; in fact, it antedates the American west by hundreds of years, going back to the late middle ages. It is itself a highly stylized refinement of old folk legends, and as such it reflected and guided popular taste—and most importantly, became a part of the popular taste not only of a nation but of a whole people. It found its way into the Western story at the moment when the western story began its journey toward decadence—although it had been present in a much less refined and sophisticated form in the pure folk tradition which made heroes of Wyatt Earp and Wild Bill Hickok and the other lawman-killers—and its nourishment, perhaps more than anything else, has served too, to postpone the oblivion so inevitably a result of decadence.

This new ingredient may be described as the Ideal of Knighthood. As the twentieth century has advanced, the Western hero has become not merely a stock cowboy but a stock cowboy whose moral and ethical frame of reference is chivalric. But before discussing the twentieth century conception of the cowboy as a hero of medieval romance, it might be well to glance briefly at one of the earliest stories in which this ingredient played a prominent part in order to arrive at a definition or description of the term *chivalric*.

In 1887, Prentiss Ingraham, most famous as an apologist and propagandist for Buffalo Bill Cody, published the first Beadle novel to use a legitimate cowboy hero: the biography of *Buck Taylor, King of the Cowboys*.<sup>3</sup> Buck, a youngster barely into manhood, attempts to join the Texas Rangers. He appears at the camp of the legendary Captain McNally, and is immediately put through a series of trials, including boxing, wrestling, and bronc busting. He handles each test skillfully, courageously, and honorably, and is admitted into the chosen band and permitted to wear the insignia of the Rangers: a diamond neckerchief pin in the shape of a spur, a ruby ring designed like a horseshoe, and as a hatband a miniature lariat. He then rides off into an adventure which includes capture by Comanches, rescue by a friendly Indian, and

<sup>3</sup>*Beadle's Half Dime Library*, No. 497 (1887).

the completion of a worthy quest—the salvation of McNally's daughter from the Indians.

The elements of the standard cowboy hero are readily apparent here; but so are elements of medieval romance. Nor are these latter confined merely to one Buck Taylor story. In *The Cowboy Clan*,<sup>4</sup> Ingraham describes cowboys as reckless, fearless, and generous to friend or fallen foe; in *Buck Taylor, The Saddle King*,<sup>5</sup> Ingraham lets Buck point out that cowboys lead wild lives primarily because of the lives they must lead, and that most of them, in spite of all, are as true, honest, and loyal as it is possible for a man to be.

Truth, honesty, loyalty—these as well as the other personal characteristics of the Western hero which I mentioned earlier, are the personal characteristics of the medieval knight as well. And other superficies of the Buck Taylor legend: initiation into a band of the Chosen by passing tests of physical strength, the gaining of a heraldic identification, the quest, courtesy to fallen or disarmed foe (one does not shoot one's enemy in the back), all are part and parcel of chivalric tradition.<sup>6</sup>

But in spite of these similarities, as one reads Ingraham's stories, one remains aware that Buck Taylor is unmistakably a cowboy hero, closer to Natty Bumppo and Deadwood Dick and Buffalo Bill than to the knights of Arthur's Table Round. The elements of romance are there, but they must be gleaned out as I have done; they are not pointed up. This is not true of many contemporary conceptions of the western hero. The same impulse that has contrived to make Wyatt Earp a valiant defender of law and order has endowed the purely fictional western hero with the superficies of knighthood and the virtues of chivalry, and has married the ingredients of an ancient heritage of popular taste to a modern, with the emphasis in many cases on the ancient.

Perhaps the most compatible union of the two tastes is to be found in the Lone Ranger stories. This most durable of all current Western heroes (he is now in his twenty-fifth year and still going strong) is the product of the creative endeavors of literally dozens of free lance writers. Whose original idea he was is not known, at least not to Beverly Gourfain who is the secretary to Mr. Harris who is presumably

<sup>4</sup>*Beadle's Dime Library*, No. 649 (1891).

<sup>5</sup>*Beadle's Dime Library*, No. 658 (1891).

<sup>6</sup>See Sidney Painter, *French Chivalry* (Baltimore, 1940), pp. 28-64 for a discussion of elements of feudal chivalry which I have used here.

an officer in The Lone Ranger, Incorporated; but since the originator can have had little to do with the development of the character during most of the twenty-five years or Miss Gourfain would at least know his name, the question of his identity is purely academic. In fact, it is more intriguing to conceive of the Lone Ranger as the development of a number of minds all working toward a common end: the creation of a folk hero. Such a conception should, at the very least, set the study of folklore back fifty years.<sup>7</sup>

The Lone Ranger, like Buck Taylor, began his adventures as a member of the Texas Rangers, a father organization roughly similar to a feudal court; or, in its legendary function more pertinent to this paper, closely similar to the formally-informal organization of King Arthur's court. His name was Reid, and he served under his older brother who bore the title Captain, and was therefore noble in the only sense that a western American could be noble.

While on a patrol charged with capturing the ruthless Butch Cavendish and his gang, Captain Reid has a premonition of disaster. He charges his younger brother with the sacred trust of caring for his wife and son in case anything should happen to him, and seeing that they receive their fair share of the brothers' silver mined—a source of independent income rather mysterious in origin comparable to that of many knights of the late medieval tales. It turns out that Captain Reid's premonition is well founded, for the six Rangers are led into ambush by a treacherous scout and five are killed by the ignoble Cavendish gang in a notorious breach of *courtoisie*, knightly and Western: one must never resort to flagrant trickery or ambush to defeat his enemy.

Young Reid lives, nursed back to health by the Potawatomi Indian, Tonto, a childhood friend who fortuitously appears on the scene shortly after the damage has been done. Tonto, when he is not nursing, spends his time burying the dead Rangers, and when Reid is well again, the Indian swears to help him avenge his brother's death and fulfill his vows. They dig an extra grave so that it will be assumed that all six Rangers were killed, and Reid dons a mask, becoming the Lone Ranger.

The premonition, the vow to avenge a most foul and dastardly deed, the rescuing Indian, and the disguise motif are commonplaces of the Western story from Leather-stockting onward. But they are also commonplace of the chivalric tale, and utilized as they are in the Lone Ranger—Tonto, like a true squire, swears vengeance with his liege lord upon his enemies; the disguise erases identity instead of merely

changing it—they more closely resemble elements of medieval than those of Western romance.

Needing a horse, Tonto and the Lone Ranger go in search of a fabled wild, white stallion. They find him locked in a fight-to-the-death battle with a giant buffalo which, at the critical moment, the Lone Ranger dispatches with a bullet. They nurse the horse to health and turn him free; but, with a high intelligence, faithfulness, and loyalty similar to that of Gawain's Gringalet and Launcelot's magnificently courageous animal in *The Knight of the Cart*, he refuses to leave. Thus is Silver born. It needs now only for the Lone Ranger to deck himself out in white clothing and start to manufacture silver bullets from his own mine for the color white, symbolic of purity and high purpose, to designate his character in true knightly fashion.

The Lone Ranger and Tonto capture the Cavendish gang and bring them to justice by law. Thirteen years later, they succeed in achieving the balance of their quest as they locate Captain Reid's son (his wife had been killed by Apaches) and turn over to him his share of the silver mine.

The Lone Ranger then decides to devote his life to the attempt to make truth, honor, and dignity prevail in a world where these values are at a premium; and he becomes, literally, a knight errant, accompanied by his squire on a quest for quests. He continues his disguise of anonymity in order that, somewhat like Parzifal, his identity may be submerged in his function, and in order that there will be no doubt that he acts altruistically. There is no other logical reason for the disguise, since there is no continuity between the tales. The silver bullets become henceforth his only mark of identification, a sort of heraldic designation; and more than this, they bear some of the qualities of the magic weapons so common in the later romances.

Except that they lack Love of God and Worship of the Ideal of Woman as motivation for great action, the Lone Ranger stories come as close as it is possible to come to identification, through the Ideals of Chivalry, with the medieval romances.<sup>7</sup> Thus they illustrate re-

<sup>7</sup>In reply to a query which I directed to the Lone Ranger, Inc. by way of radio station WXYZ, Detroit, I received the letter from Miss Gourfain referred to in this paragraph. In the letter she stated simply that no one knows whose original idea the Lone Ranger was, that the originator definitely was *not* Brace Beemer, and by implication (she refused to answer the question at all) that tales of knighthood were not consciously employed in either characterization or plot of the stories. Enclosed with the letter was a typed script summary of the "History of the Lone Ranger," which I have used in this paper.

markably well the points I have made here: that the cowboy hero, while still of the same genre as the traditional western hero, is markedly different from his woodsman and plainsman ancestors; that the closing of the frontier, and the consequent stabilization and finally death of the old West, have been contributing factors to this difference; that the orientation of the difference has been toward a past far more distant than the old West; and that popular taste has dictated the concept of the hero, which, as long as there are professional recorders of heroism, will change only in its incidentals.

Folklorists generally have overlooked the aspect of the Western story dealt with in this paper because, I suspect, the immediate influence of the Ideal of Knighthood on the Western hero is impossible to prove. But the recorder of folklore as well as the pander to popular taste almost always has found himself dealing with myth or legend on some level. And these entities by their very nature at once defy and scorn categorization. They belong to the folk, persist by being handed down by the folk; and their story trappings—plot, character, theme, etc.—are changed or perpetuated at the whim of the folk, to conform with changing times and problems, to conform with taste. Thus, it is possible to find in any folk story, pure or stylized, vestiges of previous popular treatments of a similar theme, though it is ultimately impossible to prove a direct influence of one upon the other.

However, assuming that popular taste largely accounts for the persistence of the similarities, it is unnecessary to prove influence, while it is a legitimate scholarly office to point out the similarities; especially if by so doing, a primary function of the folklorist—the determination of the place of popular taste in the formulation of popular literature—may be fulfilled.

I feel that it is somehow inappropriate for a paper such as this to end on so serious a note, therefore may I conclude anticlimactically by suggesting that there is virgin territory for future scholarship concerning the relationship between the knight of medieval romance and the

\*Even these elements of romance are not totally lacking in the western hero. Love of God is present, though it is not the same sort of love or the same sort of God that motivated the great Grail quests—He is a nebulous, pantheistic, almost deistic entity, and worship of Him is unformalized and de-ritualized. And Worship of Woman has degenerated, if you will, from an elaborate ritual of actions with physical love as its end, to an extremely simple code of celibacy.

knight of the plains? Look in, the next chance you get, on the current television treatment of the Launcelot legend; you will be perhaps not too amazed to find that the Launcelot in this version of his adventures is closer to the traditional Western hero than the Lone Ranger is.

*Michigan State University*

## MINORITY GROUPS IN OLD SOUTHERN HUMOR

by James H. Penrod

**I**N THE GENERATION before the Civil War the school of humorists commonly designated today as the Southwestern yarnspinners wrote incidentally about the Negroes and Indians of their period and their region. The present study is limited to a consideration of the treatment of these two racial groups by nine writers: Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, Joseph B. Cobb, William T. Thompson, Henry Clay Lewis, Johnson Jones Hooper, Sol Smith, John S. Robb, George W. Harris, and Marcus L. Byrn. It is the contention here that these writers generally presented the folk concept of the Negro and perhaps a lesser known folk concept of the Indian as well. This group emphasized the stereotyped traits which have prevailed in the minds of Americans for generations and which are well represented in American song and story.<sup>1</sup>

Probably the most direct evidence of the folk concept of the Negro in the work of the Southwestern yarnspinners is afforded by one of Cobb's sketches entitled "Traits of Negro Character in the South." The traits of Negro character which Cobb emphasized were faithful devotion to their masters, cheerfulness, superstitiousness, and moral irresponsibility. In his development of the subject he used both exposition and illustrative incident freely.

As examples of the first characteristic, he cited the incident of a slave seeking for his master in a storm and another in which a Negro servant saved a little white girl by jumping from a coach to rescue her.<sup>2</sup> Of the Negro's cheerfulness, he remarked: "Care never wrinkles the slave's brow and even when grief assails them . . . their natural

<sup>1</sup>A somewhat inaccurate statement was made by one student of Old Southwestern humor to the effect that the Negro was not a comic figure in the literature of the Old South. (Jeanette R. Tandy, *Crackerbox Philosophers in American Humor and Satire*, Columbia University Press, 1925, p. 66). John Herbert Nelson came considerably closer to the mark in pointing out that by 1820 or 1830 the Negro's "potential literary possibilities, at least such as made for buffoonery and humor, were clearly seen" in American fiction. Nelson gives examples from the work of Brackenridge, Poe, Cooper, Simms, Irving, and Kennedy. He referred to only one scene in the work of the yarnspinners, however: Longstreet's story of a mother and a Negro nurse who were equally futile in their attempts to quiet a crying baby. (*The Negro Character in American Literature*, University of Kansas Press, 1926, p. 23.)

<sup>2</sup>Joseph B. Cobb, *Mississippi Scents* (Philadelphia, 1851), pp. 161-165.

impulsiveness and vivacity soon enable them to subdue and forget it."<sup>3</sup> As to superstitiousness, Cobb said: "It is in the way of ghosts, and goblins, and phantoms that the Southern Negroes find a full community of thought and belief." This statement he developed more fully in the following passage:

The howl of a dog, the note of a whippoor-will, the screech of the small swamp owl, inspire them at all times with awe and solemn forebodings of evil shortly to come; and the accidental ticking noise of a little death-watch, at their bed's head of a night sounds in their ears like a funeral knell. The flight of birds after night is regarded by them as a bad omen: and the sudden appearance of a will-o'-the-wisp strikes them often-times with the most ludicrous terror.<sup>4</sup>

Cobb's "The Legend of Black Creek," included in his *Mississippi Scenes*, exemplified the mixture of the religious and the superstitious in the Negro's character. According to the folklore of the rural Mississippi area in which the scene of the story was laid, all Negroes, when confronted with phantoms, changed directions and turned their coats wrongside outward. If they had no coats, they had to follow the ghosts.<sup>5</sup> One of the story's principal characters, the loud-praying old Negro known as Uncle Ned, became the victim of a prank perpetrated by mischievous Bob Bagshot and his confederates. Obviously borrowing a page from Irving's "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," Cobb had his equivalent of Brom Bones lie in wait for Uncle Ned and his white associate on a day annually reserved for the ghosts of the region to appear at Black Creek; the superstitious Negro was so terrified that it was with much difficulty that he was restored to normal life again.

Cobb had less to say of the Negro's moral irresponsibility than of the other main characteristics cited in his analysis, but at one point he briefly contrasted the attitudes of the whites towards moral laxity in whites and blacks, the inference being that Negroes were forgiven offenses for which their white brethren might have been severely punished.<sup>6</sup>

The use of the term *folk concept* in this discussion inevitably runs afoul of sectionalism, particularly in the realm of master-slave rela-

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 167.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 170.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 180-181.

tionships. Here there can be little or no question that we must speak specifically of Southern folk concepts. Even when they assumed a defensive attitude or when they displayed reticence to treat the Negro at all, the yarnspinners were illustrating a common attitude of the rank and file of Southerners.

Despite their occasional contrariness or misdemeanors, the slaves were generally painted by the yarnspinners as good and faithful servants. For example, Major Jones's old slave Saul set the woods afire and burned twenty panels of fence on a 'possum hunt, but the tolerant master freely forgave him, saying: "He's too old to quarrel with him now, and besides, he's a monstrous good old feller."<sup>7</sup>

An interesting depiction of the mutual respect and devotion of master and slave occurred in one of Sol Smith's more serious anecdotes. During his theatrical tour of Georgia in the early 1830's Smith stopped overnight with a certain Captain Crowell, who had an old servant named Peter, "a Negro in whose judgment he had great confidence. When in the least doubt on any matter, he always appealed to Peter, who never failed to give his opinion honestly, bluntly, and immediately." In the course of the sketch Peter advised his master to take in a preacher for the night, to let the clergyman deliver a long prayer, and finally to break off that prayer.<sup>8</sup> Smith also gave an account of a Negro sermon, partly to illustrate the Negro's gift of sincere if rude eloquence and partly to produce humorous effects by the dialect and the mispronunciation of such words as "cor punctuation" and "sallivation" or by such phrases as "scrub us with the scrubbin-brush of corruption."<sup>9</sup>

The Negro Sam in Robb's "The Pre-Emption Right" was both devoted attendant and friend to the solitary Missouri squatter, Dick Kelsy, in the latter's wilderness cabin. Robb said of their relationship: "Kelsy and the Negro had been raised together, and from association, although so opposite their positions, had imbibed a lasting affection for each other,—each would have freely shed blood in the other's defence."<sup>10</sup> Dick Kelsy expressed the warm regard which he felt for his faithful servant by comparing him favorably with the villain of the sketch in these words: "Sam, you're a nigger, but thar's more

<sup>7</sup>William T. Thompson, *Major Jones's Sketches of Travel* (Philadelphia, 1848), p. 191.

<sup>8</sup>Solomon F. Smith, *Theatrical Management in the West and South for Thirty Years* (New York, 1868), p. 101.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 81.

<sup>10</sup>John S. Robb, *Streaks of Squatter Life* (Philadelphia, 1846), p. 118.

real white man under your black skin than could be found in an acre of such varmints as that *sucker*. Give me your fist, old feller; while Dick Kelsy's got anythin' in this world, you shall share it!"<sup>11</sup> In the climax of the story Sam saved Dick's life by staunching his wounds inflicted by a treacherous interloper and by nursing him back to health.

References to the corporal punishment of slaves were naturally not numerous in the Southwestern yarns, and when they occurred, the chastisement described was usually rather mild. In a Longstreet story, a young mother in exasperation gave her little girl's Negro nurse a slight box on the ears, "in which there seemed to be no anger mixed at all, and which Rose received as a *matter of course*, without even changing countenance under it."<sup>12</sup> Major Jones, in speaking of the slave children on his modest Georgia plantation, remarked that they "had to have a little buckin to keep em from spilin 'fore I cum home."<sup>13</sup> Slightly more drastic was the punishment meted out to the wayward slave girl in one of Lewis' stories who pretended to have fits to avoid work until her antics were recognized by the "swamp doctor" for what they were. Her cure was effected by a combination of exposure and, in the author's words, "a liberal flagellation."<sup>14</sup>

Not to be ignored, however, is the more brutalized, animal-like concept of the Negro presented in a few of the yarns, principally those of Harris, Lewis (Madison Tensas), and Byrn. These sketches were undoubtedly funnier to the reading public of that period than to the readers of today, but many jokes and crude stories which present the same concept of the Negro are still orally circulated. As an example of the brutish treatment of the Negro, Harris had Sut Lovingood, his rowdy East Tennessee mountain prankster, break up a Negro night meeting with a particularly malodorous gas and a dozen hornets' nests.<sup>15</sup> "Madison Tensas" sometimes emphasized the physical grotesqueness and stupidity of Negroes. Hooper's humorous sketch about the slave who was whipped on Saturday although the master could find no specific basis for chastisement must certainly be called insensitive.<sup>16</sup> Most heartless of all was the treatment of the

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 123.

<sup>12</sup>Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, *Georgia Scenes* (New York, 1840), p. 176.

<sup>13</sup>Thompson, *loc. cit.*

<sup>14</sup>Henry Clay Lewis, *Odd Leaves from the Life of a Louisiana Swamp Doctor* (Philadelphia, 1843), p. 191.

<sup>15</sup>George W. Harris, *Sut Lovingood's Yarns* (New York, 1867), pp. 157-171.

<sup>16</sup>Johnson Jones Hooper, *Widow Rugby's Husband; A Night at the Ugly Man's and Other Tales of Alabama* (Philadelphia, 1851), p. 32.

Negro in the far-fetched yarns of Marcus L. Byrn, such as his story of a supposedly dead Negro whose head was sawed open for autopsy before it was discovered that he was still alive.<sup>17</sup> Such caricatures represented the exception rather than the rule.

The Indian, who appeared more infrequently in the yarns than the Negro, was likewise treated primarily as a comic figure by the yarn-spinners. Since the red men had, by and large, ceased to be a serious menace to the inhabitants of the Old Southwest by 1830, it was not unnatural that neither the heroic Indians of the Leatherstocking saga nor the bloodthirsty savages of many other frontier romances should figure in the yarns to any great extent. Keiser has pointed out that the Indian was treated humorously in James K. Paudling's *Konigs-marke, The Long Finne* (1823).<sup>18</sup> It is questionable, however, whether any writers before Hooper and Sol Smith had completely stripped the Indian of all his primitive glamor and transformed him into a broadly comic figure.

The mature life of Simon Suggs, as recorded by Hooper, began with the arch rogue as a speculator in Indian lands. Later he capitalized on the scare created by a minor uprising of the Creek Indians to have himself elected captain of the "Tallapoosy Vollantares," having first ascertained that there was no longer any danger in the situation. Simon's only direct encounter with Indians occurred when he led the "vollantares" to an Indian ball game between the natives of the upper and lower villages. In this sketch the savage, violent nature of the Indian is portrayed but is subordinated to the venal skullduggery of the swindler Suggs.

The description of the Indian ball game is interesting both for the detailed account of an Indian custom and for the light it sheds upon Indian character.

To play it, a level piece of ground, some two or three hundreds yards long, is selected, and the center ascertained. Goals are designated at each end, and the ball is thrown up at the center. One side endeavors to get it to one "base," while their antagonists strive to carry it to the other. The players are armed with two short sticks, each of which is bent and tied at one end, so as to form a sort of spoon; and when these ends

<sup>17</sup>Marcus L. Byrn, *The Life and Adventures of an Arkansas Doctor* (New York, 1879), pp. 147-152.

<sup>18</sup>Albert Keiser, *The Indian in American Literature* (New York, 1933), pp. 46-51.

are placed together, they make an oval cup in which the ball is caught, and then hurled to a surprising distance. Every time the ball is carried to a goal, it counts one for the side who takes it there.

No idea of the furious excitement into which the players are worked, can be conceived by one who has never witnessed a scene of the kind. They run over and trample upon each other; knock down their antagonists with their ball-sticks; trip them as they are running at full speed, and, in short, employ all kinds of force and foul playing to win the game. Generally there are two or three hundred—often five—engaged in the sport at once; all naked except the "flop," and in most instances the affair ends in a terrible melee.<sup>19</sup>

As ever, Simon's interest in this strenuous contest was primarily financial, he having bet on the upper village. When a white man tried to convince him that the Indians planned to massacre the whites, Simon, ever the opportunist, made off with the bag of silver set aside as the winner's stakes, fording a stream to elude the pursuing Indians. From his safe vantage point on the other side of the river Simon defied the Indian chief's clamors for the return of the silver.<sup>20</sup> The humorous picture of Simon and the Indian chief haggling from their respective positions is in striking contrast to the stereotyped powwow of frontier romance between chief and scout.

At least two of Sol Smith's autobiographical yarns featured Creek Indians, who appear essentially harmless but at the same time capable of producing terror in the breasts of certain people. During a tour of Georgia in 1832, Smith noted the dread of the Indians in the heart of his caterer, identified simply as John C—. Thereupon he hired four harmless Creeks to ride along through a section of Georgia with the troupe's wagon train, hinting broadly at the same time to the finicky caterer that the Indians were angry at someone. Finally John left the wagon on horseback, with the Indians in hot pursuit. Later the Smith troupe found the Indians with John's wig, they having pretended to scalp him. The imaginative victim of the prank, upon returning to the troupe, fashioned a story that he was pursued by not less than 15,000 Indians.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup>Johnson J. Hooper, *Simon Suggs' Adventures* (Americus, Georgia, 1928), pp. 79-80.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 78-82.

<sup>21</sup>Solomon F. Smith, *Sol Smith's Theatrical Apprenticeship* (Philadelphia, 1845), pp. 136-140.

During the same tour of Georgia, Smith employed as stage extras for the popular drama *Pizarro* twenty-four Creeks, who were to furnish their own bows, arrows, and tomahawks, receiving for their services fifty cents each and a glass of whisky. Unfortunately, the Indians drank the liquor in advance, a development which inspired them to disrupt the performance with the Creek war song and dance. Sol and the other principals in the play were obliged to participate with every ounce of energy and courage at their command. Even the dropping of the curtain did not stop the Creeks in their ceremonial. The actors escaped unharmed, but Manager Smith politely declined the services of the same troupe for the next night's performance.<sup>22</sup>

Perhaps no author has painted a more ludicrous picture of the redskin than did Henry Clay Lewis in the person of old Tubba, "a loafing Indian, who hung continually around the doctor's office, seeking what he might devour, or rather steal . . ." This shiftless drunkard spoke in the stereotyped manner of the fictional Indian, as in: "Ugh; Injum want whiskey; give Tubba whiskey; bring wild duck, so many. . . ." His particular role in the story told by Lewis, the Louisiana swamp doctor, was to create a sensation by drinking a bottle marked "Solution of Arsenic," a harmless alcoholic concoction which the doctor had so labeled to keep it from falling into the hands of his students.<sup>23</sup>

The outstanding exception to the comic treatment of the Indian by the yarnspinners was T. B. Thorpe's well-known Mike Fink story, "The Disgraced Scalp Lock," in which the king of the flatboatmen barely escaped being murdered by the vengeful renegade Cherokee called Proud Joe. Joe was shown as a drunkard of filthy personal habits, a man who lived in the direst poverty, but nevertheless he was inordinately proud of his scalp-lock, haughty, and taciturn in his demeanor.<sup>24</sup> Bloodthirsty Indians are mentioned in Davy Crockett's account of the massacre at Fort Mimms during the Creek War of 1813, but there are no individual portraits in his work.<sup>25</sup> Hooper became serious in several passages about the exploitation of the In-

<sup>22</sup>Smith, *Theatrical Management in the West and South for Thirty Years*, pp. 79-80.

<sup>23</sup>Lewis, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>24</sup>Thomas Bangs Thorpe, *The Mysteries of the Backwoods; or Sketches of the Southwest* (Philadelphia, 1846), pp. 122-136.

<sup>25</sup>*The Autobiography of David Crockett*. Edited by Hamlin Garland (New York, 1923), pp. 71-72.

dians by the white men, even telling one heartrending story of the abuse of an Indian chief and his daughter by a rascally speculator.<sup>26</sup>

The examples cited indicate that the Indians were a decidedly minor character type in the work of the yarnspinners, sometimes represented as murderous savages but more often as relatively harmless, excitable people who were particularly fond of strong drink. As in the case of the Negroes, their most frequent roles were those of comic characters in support of the principal actors.

<sup>26</sup>Hooper, *Simon Suggs' Adventures*, pp. 51-54.

*Troy State College*

## THE ANONYMOUS VERSES OF A NARCOTICS ADDICT

by Haldeen Braddy

THE LITERATURE<sup>1</sup> on drug addiction contains a corpus of poems of both folk and literary origins. Among the more popular narcotic poems and songs of recent time are such familiar titles as "China-town, My Chinatown,"<sup>2</sup> "Cocaine,"<sup>3</sup> "Cocaine Lil,"<sup>4</sup> "Honey, Take a Whiff on Me,"<sup>5</sup> "Irene,"<sup>6</sup> "Minnie the Moocher,"<sup>7</sup> "The Old Dope Peddler,"<sup>8</sup> "Why Don't You Be Like Me?"<sup>9</sup> and "Willie the Weeper."<sup>10</sup> Interesting as these materials are, they clearly reflect their literary quality in being written, with the exception of a few words, in conventional English as well as in being either composed or edited by writers who are not addicts. Of more importance to the student of drug argot is such a rarer verse specimen as the short excerpt from an untitled ballad cited in *American Speech* by the noted Professor Maurer in 1938.<sup>11</sup> Saving this excerpt, avowedly the composition of an addicted user of drugs, no representative group of narcotic verse, so far as is known, has ever appeared in a learned journal for the linguistic record. Since evidence of the currency of this underworld argot has rested hitherto mainly upon oral sources, it obviously would be valuable to have written proof in the form of the original verses of a known addict to enlarge the present knowledge of the argot as well as to afford a fuller file on its folk usage.

<sup>1</sup>David W. Maurer and Victor H. Vogel, *Narcotics and Narcotic Addiction* (Springfield, Ill., 1954), pp. 254-255, 293-294.

<sup>2</sup>William Jerome and Jean Schwartz, New York, Remick Music Corporation, 1906.

<sup>3</sup>M. E. Henry, *Folk-Songs from the Southern Highlands* (New York, 1938), p. 140.

<sup>4</sup>John and Alan Lomax, *Best Loved American Folk Songs* (New York, 1947), p. 291.

<sup>5</sup>John and Alan Lomax, *American Ballads and Folk Songs* (New York, 1938), pp. 186, 184.

<sup>6</sup>John and Alan Lomax, *Negro Folk Songs as Sung by Lead Belly* (New York, 1936), p. 237.

<sup>7</sup>Cab Calloway, New York, Mills Music Publishers, 1931.

<sup>8</sup>Tom Lehrer, *The Tom Lehrer Song Book* (New York, 1952), pp. 51-53.

<sup>9</sup>David W. Maurer, "Argot of the Underworld Narcotic Addict: Part II," *American Speech* (1938), XIII, 181, note 6.

<sup>10</sup>Mr. O'Brien, who collected the verses in Arkansas in 1956, said that the Creole woman, an octoroon, came from Louisiana.

In this connection, it is possible to submit, through permission from Mr. R. S. O'Brien,<sup>10</sup> Special Agent of the Bureau of Narcotics, the texts of six poems about narcotics by an anonymous Creole woman who is a confirmed user of drugs. However short on literary merit, her verses lack nothing in realistic downrightness or revealing autobiographical disclosure. For the student of current English, they possess primary significance, for they represent the writing of an established addict and show narcotic terms, here explained in the footnotes, to be an integral and natural expression of her working vocabulary. The full texts of these original poems appear under her following six alliterative titles.

### I. MARIHUANA MIXUP

It happened a long, long time ago;  
 I thought I knew a lot.  
 I had a feeling I must go  
 And blast<sup>11</sup> some crazy<sup>12</sup> pot.<sup>13</sup>  
 I smoked and smoked and then  
 I was floating in the sky.  
 I smoked some more and got a buzz<sup>14</sup>  
 And knew that I was high.<sup>14</sup>  
 I floated down the avenue,  
 Just laughing all the time;  
 And then it was I really knew  
 That blasting<sup>11</sup> weed<sup>15</sup> was fine.  
 My feet were two feet off the ground,  
 And I was in the air.  
 Later, I began coming down;  
 I didn't feel so hot;  
 I made it slowly back to town;  
 I capped<sup>16</sup> me some more pot;<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup>smoke, by cupping the hands and drawing deeply.

<sup>12</sup>good, fine, excellent.

<sup>13</sup>marihuana in a cigarette or in a pipe bowl.

<sup>14</sup>feeling of elation ranging from euphoria to intoxication.

<sup>15</sup>marihuana, a plant or weed.

<sup>16</sup>To "cap" may mean to open a capsule of a drug or to buy a drug. The verb "capped" appears to signify "got possession of" or "bought," whereas to "cop" or "copped" may mean to "steal" or "stole." To "cap" also may refer to filling a capsule.

I stashed<sup>17</sup> the stuff in someone's hall  
And went on home to bed.  
My old man<sup>18</sup> knew about it all,  
But nothing much was said.  
The next day I got busted<sup>19</sup>  
As I walked out of the door.  
Someone I had trusted  
Gave my name into the law.  
I knew I could beat the case  
If the cops could be bought,  
And next day with a smiling face  
I made it from the court.  
I found myself some cash;  
Then I went on to the meet;<sup>20</sup>  
From there picked up my stash.<sup>17</sup>  
The same old story repeats, you know.  
I think I know a lot.  
I got a feeling I must go  
And blast<sup>11</sup> some crazy<sup>12</sup> pot.<sup>13</sup>

## II. NARCOTIC NOEL

'Twas the night before Christmas,  
And all through the pad<sup>21</sup>  
Reefers<sup>22</sup> and cocaine  
Was all that we had,  
When down the chimney came sniffing Sam  
With his little black book  
In the palm of his hand.  
He said, "Man, two caps<sup>23</sup> of 'H'<sup>24</sup>  
Is all that I got,  
And you know how that goes;  
I'm gonna shoot<sup>25</sup>  
Them myself."

<sup>17</sup>A "stash" is a "hidden package"; to "stash" is to "hide"; "stashed" means "cached."

<sup>18</sup>According to Mr. O'Brien, a "hustling girl" calls her procurer her "old man."

<sup>19</sup>arrested by the police or federal agents.

<sup>20</sup>the meeting place with the seller.

<sup>21</sup>sleeping quarters, bed, cot, or apartment. When she says "I split from my pad" she means that she left her home or her "old man" (O'Brien).

## III. BOP BUBBLE

The drums are beating faster  
 Than the beating of my heart.  
 The rhythm gets more frantic,<sup>26</sup>  
 And it tears my soul apart,  
 And in the background I can hear  
 The wailing of a horn,  
 As the night is drifting on  
 Into another dawn.  
 So I sit here, and I'm nodding;<sup>27</sup>  
 And I hear Lester<sup>28</sup> blow.  
 I dig<sup>29</sup> the blasting of his sax;  
 The sound's both sweet and low.  
 The music's really getting hot.  
 It's setting off a spark;  
 It's ready to explode right now  
 In this inviting dark.  
 Yes, this is my world always,  
 With the best kicks<sup>34</sup> I have known;  
 And when I get the feel of it,  
 I'm by myself alone.  
 Then I'm cut off<sup>30</sup> from all of you,  
 Though I know deep down within  
 That it gets me as it gets you  
 Way underneath your skin.

<sup>25</sup>marihuana cigarettes.

<sup>26</sup>ampoules, capsules.

<sup>27</sup>heroin; usually "junk" and "shit" also mean heroin.

<sup>28</sup>inject with the hypodermic needle. "Sam" may be the name for any dealer in drugs who is an addict himself. He may have had a "reader," or a prescription, when he bought the heroin. If so, he might logically call the box he carried it in his "little black book."

<sup>29</sup>faster; a "frantic" character is an addict; to be "frantic" is to want a drug or, in a special sense, to desire coition.

<sup>30</sup>succumbing to a drug.

<sup>31</sup>Probably from Lester Young, a famous saxophone player.

<sup>32</sup>to listen or to understand. Mr. O'Brien cited "I snap you" as synonymous with "I dig you."

<sup>33</sup>removed; insensible from narcotic intoxication.

## IV. MEDITATION

As I sit here alone in my little jail cell,  
I'm looking real beat and feeling like hell.  
The feds<sup>31</sup> got me busted<sup>19</sup> for one little sale;  
So here I am with my ass in a jail.  
I'm sick as a dog, got the shakes and the twitches.  
I can't get a fix,<sup>32</sup> the sons of a bitches.  
They don't know what it's like for a junkie<sup>33</sup> to kick;<sup>34</sup>  
I just wish they knew what it's like to be sick.<sup>35</sup>  
But they ask you those questions  
And tear you apart.  
Who's your connection?<sup>36</sup> And how did you start?  
Man, all these questions are getting me down.  
I wonder what's happening with the junkies<sup>33</sup> in town.  
I bet they're capping<sup>16</sup> right now from their man<sup>36</sup>  
And shooting<sup>25</sup> up as much shit<sup>24</sup> as they can.  
I wish someone would bring some horse<sup>24</sup> in this place;  
I'd be pacing these floors with a smile on my face.  
And even though the hi<sup>14</sup> wouldn't last,  
It'd still goof me out.  
I'd live over the past;  
I'd think of the streets and the things I could do,  
Remember old times, both happy and blue.  
So you have your freedom  
And do all your dirt;  
Then wonder why you had to be hurt.  
Well, I've done all the doing  
I'll do for awhile, so I'll just take it slow<sup>37</sup>  
Till I come up for trial.

<sup>31</sup>federal narcotic agents.

<sup>32</sup>a shot with a needle.

<sup>33</sup>an addict (pl. -s).

<sup>34</sup>to quit the habit.

<sup>35</sup>to suffer the "shakes and twitches" of the withdrawal syndrome; synonymous with "having a monkey on your back" (O'Brien).

<sup>36</sup>peddler, who may be referred to as "the man," "the man from Montana" (a variant of "the old man of the mountain").

<sup>37</sup>pass me out. "Goofed" means knocked out from overdosages, generally from barbiturates (O'Brien).

## V. JUNKIE'S JOY

Last night I had a date  
 With this guy,  
 And he inquired if I got hi.<sup>14</sup>  
 I told him "No"  
 But said, "Let's go;  
 I'll be a junkie."<sup>33</sup>  
 I went along with him to cop.<sup>16</sup>  
 It took so long I blew my top.<sup>38</sup>  
 But he came through  
 With a big one, two.<sup>39</sup>  
 Man, what a junkie.<sup>33</sup>

## VI. CRADLE CAPERS

I knew it not then,  
 But when I was one,  
 My life as a junkie<sup>33</sup>  
 Had just begun.  
 Since ma was a viper  
 And daddy would snort,<sup>40</sup>  
 I'd watch from the sidelines  
 And really get brought.<sup>41</sup>  
 Time went by,  
 And at the age of two  
 I'd seen so much  
 I knew just what to do.  
 Since ma was a viper  
 And daddy would snort,<sup>40</sup>  
 There wasn't much more  
 I had to be taught.  
 On the day I was but three  
 I started blasting<sup>11</sup> some crazy<sup>12</sup> tea;<sup>15</sup>  
 But I wasn't satisfied,  
 Strange as it seems,

<sup>13</sup>suffer the withdrawal without complaining (O'Brien).

<sup>14</sup>became angry, lost my head. [The first stanza of "Junkie's Joy" has been omitted because of its objectionable vulgarity (Braddy).]

<sup>33</sup>two injections, two spasmodic physical reactions; evidently he had the so-called "two-arm" habit.

<sup>40</sup>sniff cocaine or heroin. "Viper" would seem here to mean one who sniffs a powdered drug.

For I'd see spikes<sup>42</sup> and droppers<sup>43</sup>  
Whenever I dreamed.  
On my next birthday,  
When I was four,  
I hopped on my tricycle  
And went off to score.<sup>44</sup>  
It was then I discovered  
From my connection<sup>36</sup>  
That I was young  
And needed protection;  
But I got a new man,<sup>36</sup>  
And by the time I was five  
I'd shot<sup>25</sup> so much shit<sup>24</sup>  
I was more dead than alive.  
Since ma was a viper  
And daddy would snort,<sup>40</sup>  
And I was a junkie.<sup>33</sup>  
We were bound to be caught.  
So I played it cool.<sup>45</sup> and when I was six,  
I decided to go back to blasting<sup>11</sup> those sticks,<sup>46</sup>  
Or my health would be ruined then.  
What could I do  
With veins that collapsed<sup>47</sup>  
And had abscesses<sup>48</sup> too?  
So I played cool<sup>45</sup> until I was seven;  
That's when I found myself  
Floating in heaven.

<sup>41</sup>instructed, taught.

<sup>42</sup>needles, the hypodermic needle being often called "golden spike."

<sup>43</sup>Eye-droppers, substituting for needles, are sometimes inserted in a rent in the flesh.

<sup>44</sup>make a successful purchase or injection of a drug.

<sup>45</sup>quietly; to act carefully and not arouse suspicion (O'Brien).

<sup>46</sup>marihuana cigarettes or bundles of them.

<sup>47</sup>darkened, flattened veins from numerous punctures and hot solutions injected into them (O'Brien).

<sup>48</sup>from shooting impure "medicine": opium poisoning obtained from smoking it or "cooking" paregoric by evaporation in a spoon to get the opium from it (O'Brien).

That morning I capped<sup>46</sup> some morphine at last,  
 And from that day on  
 Things were moving too fast.  
 A whole year went by, and then I was eight;  
 I went uptown to see  
 Where I could get straight.<sup>49</sup>  
 I got there; and some cat.<sup>50</sup>  
 He just winked at me  
 And offered to cap<sup>46</sup> some fabulous "C."<sup>51</sup>  
 So you know what happened;  
 And when I was nine,  
 I bumped into an old friend of mine.  
 I told him I split from my pad<sup>21</sup>  
 Awhile back,  
 So he felt sorry for me  
 And gave me some smack.<sup>52</sup>  
 Things were real frantic,<sup>26</sup>  
 And when I was ten,  
 I spotted this stud in an opium den.  
 His face was all sallow  
 And yellow and drawn,  
 But he told me he felt like  
 He knew I was cool,<sup>45</sup>  
 And he said I was ripe  
 To start blasting<sup>11</sup> opium  
 From a water pipe.  
 I took a few pokes,<sup>11</sup>  
 And, man, I got stoned.<sup>53</sup>  
 I goofed<sup>36</sup> and just wanted  
 To be left alone.  
 Then somebody said, "Chick,  
 You 'bout ready to fly."

<sup>46</sup>The phrase means, not "to go straight" (conform to the law), but "to get the stuff" (purchase narcotics) [O'Brien].

<sup>49</sup>musician.      <sup>51</sup>Cocaine.

<sup>53</sup>She probably means that he gave her "money" for buying drugs or that he selected customers for her services as a prostitute.

So I flew off the table  
And blackened one eye.  
But I didn't care  
He'd just been reborn.  
If I did have that fall.  
I was so stoned<sup>53</sup> I was blind.  
Man, what a ball!  
Twenty-four hours later I finally came down  
And made a decision to go back downtown.  
I wanted some more  
Of that fabulous "O";<sup>54</sup>  
And ever since then  
It's been go, go, go.  
Time has gone on,  
And now I'm eighteen,  
But I make it my business  
To stay on the scene.<sup>55</sup>  
And if I don't get hi<sup>14</sup>  
When I go to score,<sup>44</sup>  
That's all right.  
I just use a little bit more.  
Yesterday I shot<sup>25</sup> some real wild shit,<sup>24</sup>  
But I had a hard time getting a hit.<sup>56</sup>  
Since my veins are all hardened,  
I'll have to skin pop<sup>57</sup>  
And cut down a little<sup>58</sup>  
Each day till I stop.  
Although I say that right now to myself,  
I know junk<sup>24</sup> is one thing I never can shelf.<sup>59</sup>  
I'll never be able to give up that hi.<sup>14</sup>  
So I'll just be a junkie<sup>33</sup>  
Till the day that I die.

<sup>53</sup>completely intoxicated.

<sup>54</sup>Opium.

<sup>55</sup>the place where drugs are available.

<sup>56</sup>inserting the needle in her hardened veins.

<sup>57</sup>inject into the epidermis.

<sup>58</sup>a futile reduction treatment (O'Brien).

<sup>59</sup>give up, quit.

The general impression one receives from all the poems is that the anonymous author uses standard, rather than regional, speech. A possible indication of the writer's Southern origin (*i. e.*, Louisiana) appears in "Bop Bubble" (No. III, lines 6, 8), where *horn* (hawn) rhymes with *dawn*; but the sound (cp. VI, 68, 70), which could be only an imperfect rhyme, does not give the verse either a regional or a dialect flavor. The narcotic argot itself would be understood by an addict anywhere in the United States or even by foreigners intimate with the illegal traffic in drugs. These several texts are thus further evidence of the fact that "Narcotic ziph tends to be, not a regional tongue, but an international language."<sup>60</sup>

The six narcotic poems afford an excellent contemporary illustration of folk literature by an anonymous poetess of unmistakable folk status.

<sup>60</sup>"Narcotic Argot Along the Mexican Border," *American Speech* (1955), XXX, 89.

*Texas Western College*

## HERACLITUS AND DEMOCRITUS IN ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND

by R. H. Bowers

IN 1906, ALOIS BRANDL printed the text of the anonymous *The Riddles of Heraclitus and Democritus* (1958; *STC* 13174) as part of a very useful survey and analysis of printed Elizabethan and Jacobean riddle collections entitled "Shakespeare's 'Book of Merry Riddles' und die anderen Rätselbücher seiner Zeit."<sup>1</sup> The riddles contained in this text are literary or "learned" rather than folk riddles: we are not confronted with the descent of social or intellectual values<sup>2</sup>—as may be seen by the following example:

No. 3                    Manay a man doth speake of mee,  
                          But no man euer shall me see  
                          For all in one, doe full agree  
                          That nowhere must my dwelling bee.    (sig. A2r)

### *Solution*

It may perhaps be vnderstood of the winde: but rightlier I  
thinke, of that which we calle vacuitie or emptiness. Which is a  
name, and none effence. For the penetrant subtiltie of aire, suf-  
fereth nothing to be emptie, as say the philosophers.

This note is concerned with the title which the anonymous author or compiler attached to his collection of riddles, which contain no reference whatsoever to the two philosophers. Now it would have been quite fitting to ascribe a collection of riddles to the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus in 1598 for he was well known in academic circles as the obscure or riddling philosopher (e.g. Bacon, *Advancement of Learning*, 1605, I.1), perhaps because his notions or sayings survived in elliptical fragments, perhaps because he was supposed to have imitated Delphic deliverances in being deliberately cryptic, demanding a Delian diver to fathom them (Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*

(1) See *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, XLII (1906), 1-64; for manuscript material, see Frederic Tupper Jr., "The Holm Riddles (MS Harley 1960)," *PMLA* XVIII (1903), 210-72.

(2) See the address by the doyen of American folklorists, Arthur Taylor, "The Place of Folklore," *PMLA* LXVII (1952), esp. p. 60.

I,74: nec consulto dicis occulte tamquam Heraclitus; Walter Burley, *Liber de Vita et Moribus Philosophorum*, Cap. XLVII: Hic propter ipsius nimis obscuras sentencias dictus est a philosophis Eraclitus tenebrosus<sup>3</sup>). But the ascription to Democritus jibes ill unless the connotation of the "laughing" philosopher was intended in order to suggest that the riddles were entertaining. The simplest explanation however is surely that the author was exploiting what was by 1598 a familiar literary theme or legend: the juxtaposition and crude antithesis between these two philosophers who embodied two persistent human types, one who wept, and the other who laughed at the human spectacle. Robert Burton called himself Democritus Junior, as a person who nervously laughed from despair of mankind, as he went about his self-appointed task of anatomizing melancholy in 1621. He wrote in the preface to *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (New York, 1885, I, 65):

Heraclitus, the philosopher, out of a serious meditation of man's lives, fell a weeping, and with continual tears bewailed their misery, madness, and folly. Democritus on the other side, burst out a laughing, their whole life seemed to him so ridiculous. . . .

There is no historical evidence from Greek antiquity to support this legend—which was well established in Rome at the time of Juvenal (*Sat. X*, 28-52). As Cora E. Lutz demonstrates in an authoritative essay, the legend has always served a useful purpose: "It makes no difference if there never existed a laughing and a weeping philosopher; certainly they ought to have existed."<sup>4</sup> Miss Lutz argues further that the legend properly implies no ultimate antithesis, for both the laughing and weeping moods exist in the same human being as different phases of his emotional life. Santayana has said: "the same facts that make one laugh make one weep. No wholehearted man, no sane art, can be limited to either mood."<sup>5</sup> A self-portrait by Rembrandt in the Wallraf-Richartz Museum in Cologne portrays himself as Democritus

(3) Burley's treatise was ed. by Hermann Knust (Bibliothek des Litterarischen Vereins in Stuttgart, No. CLXXVII), Tübingen, 1886; see p. 188 therein.

(4) See her "Democritus and Heraclitus," *Classical Journal*, XLIX (1953-54), p. 312.

(5) See George Santayana, *Persons and Places* (New York, 1944), pp. 159-60.

painting a portrait of Heraclitus, indicating, no doubt, that the weeping and laughing moods are experienced by everyman.<sup>6</sup>

In attempting to trace the legend of the laughing and weeping philosophers in England, I have consulted the early histories of philosophy (which are mostly compilations of biographical scraps and proverbs fancifully attributed, to say nothing of florilegia or the late medieval tradition of *spruchpoesie* or *lehrdichtung*).<sup>6a</sup> Curiously enough, the legend does appear, carefully weighted, in Roger Bacon's *Opus Majus*<sup>7</sup> in the middle of the thirteenth century. But it is not mentioned in the *Metalogicon* of John of Salisbury; or in the *Liber de Vita et Moribus Philosophorum* of Walter Burley, although Burley does provide short accounts of the men (in chapters 44 and 47).<sup>8</sup> The men are not mentioned at all in the *Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers* (1477),<sup>9</sup> the first English book printed on English soil; nor in Eunapius' *Lives of the Philosophers* of 1579 (STC 10566). The most popular Elizabethan history of "philosophy," of course, which went through fifteen editions, was William Baldwin's *A Treatise of Morall Philosophy* (1547): this work contains allusions to the two men but no account of the weeping-laughing legend.<sup>10</sup> The same would obtain of the account provided in Diogenes Laertius, continental editions of whose influential work were easily available in England.<sup>11</sup>

(6) A different interpretation is advanced by W. Stechow, "Rembrandt-Democritus," *Art Quarterly*, VII (1944), p. 234.

(6a) See Max Förster, "Kleine Mitteilungen zur mitteilenglischen Lenrdichtung," *Archiv für das Studium der Neueren Sprachen*, CIV (1900), Ruth Miller Kniep, *Liber Proverbiorum* (MS Harley 7578), unpublished University of Florida dissertation, 1954, pp. xx-xxvi.

(10) Baldwin's work, revised and augmented by T. Paulfreyman, teaches moral philosophy by "adages, precepts, and parables and similitudes", largely composed by himself (?) and attributed in fanciful vein to "Hermes," "Socrates", "Pithagoras," "Diogenes," etc. in the tradition of fifteenth-century *spruchpoesie*. "Of mans life, how full of miseries and wretchednesse it is" is the title of section v in Book II, wherein Democritus, in no laughing mood, is alleged to have said "Consider that mannes life is weake and fraile . . ."; and Heraclitus is alleged to have said: "Alas, alas, what a sorte of diuers euill chaunces and how strangely they happen to us in this lyfe . . ." In the same section, Socrates is fancied to have said: "God hath purposely ordained the grieves, miseries, and sorrowes of this life to bee so many . . . to make vs the more desirous of the heauenly life, which is nothing but ioy and pleasure." I quote from the 4th ed. of 1596; STC 1264, 49r-50r.

(11) See Curt F. Bühler, "Greek Philosophers in the Literature of the Later Middle Ages," *Speculum*, XII (1937), 440-55. Bacon used Diogenes as a source for his passing allusions to Heraclitus and Democritus in the *Advancement of Learning* (1605), as he rejects ancient philosophy in general, and Aristotle in particular; he does not mention the laughing-weeping legend.

The first literary reference to the legend which I have discovered, apart from a passing allusion to Democritus as a wit in the dedication of the *Encomium Moriae* to Sir Thomas More, is the following passage from the anonymous *The Book of the Fair Gentlewoman Lady Fortune*, which was dated 1540 and attributed to Sir Thomas More by W. C. Hazlitt who edited it as No. 13 in the Henry Huth *Fugitive Tracts* reprints, London, 1875, first series. But the item is not listed in the *STC*, or in the *Huth Sale Catalogue* (1911-12); so I cannot vouch for the accuracy of the dating. The passage reads as follows:

Heraclitus to, lyst felowshyp to kepe  
With glad pouerte, Democrytus also  
Of whiche the fyrist can neuer but wepe  
To se howe thyche, the blynd people go  
With great laboure, to purchase care and wo.  
That other laugheth, to see the folysse apes  
Howe earnestly, they walke about thryr Japes.

At the end of the sixteenth century, the instances come fast and thick:

- (a) *The Defense of Contraries* (1593; *STC* 6467, one of Munday's translations from the French): Heraclitus was alwaies more esteemed for his weeping, then euer Democritus for his laughing. (sig. NL<sup>v</sup>)
- (b) *Remedies against Discontentment drawen from Auncient Philosophers* (anonymous. 1596; *STC* 20869):  
Heraclitus bewayled the faultes of menne, at the which Democritus laughed. (sig. F4<sup>v</sup>)
- (c) Joseph Wyborne, *The New Age of Old Names* (1609; *STC* 26055):  
Heraclitus tears, are here more seemely then Democritus laughter. sig. R2<sup>r</sup>.

Of course an original mind would bend the legend to his own use, and the following instance from Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici* is atypical:

Democritus, that thought to laugh the times into goodness, seems to me as deeply Hypochondriack as Heraclitus, that bewailed them. It moves not my spleen to behold the multitude in their proper humours. . . (II,iv)

Thomas Stanley's *The History of Philosophy* (1655; Wing 5237), which is usually considered the first systematic history of philosophy in England—although it does lean heavily at times on Diogenes Laertius—contains the weeping-laughing legend (on pp. 440 and 458 of the London, 1701, edition); but it sets forth no useful analysis of the atomic theories of Democritus or the flux theory of Heraclitus. We have to wait for Ralph Cudworth's imposing and indignant *True Intellectual System* of 1678 (I,ii) for such an analysis, peppered with a slashing attack on the alleged "materialism" of these ancient philosophers.

There are doubtless many allusions to the Heraclitus and Democritus legend during the English Renaissance which have escaped my attention; but on the basis of the illustrative material here assembled - much of it for the first time - it appears safe to draw the obvious conclusion: the legend was well known in the late rather than the early Renaissance period, but the ontology of these philosophers was pretty much of a closed book until the development of modern science inadvertently challenged the non-utilitarian sentiments of people like the Cambridge Platonists and precipitated one of the significant logomachias of the seventeenth century.<sup>12</sup>

(12) See C. T. Harrison, "The Ancient Atomists and English Literature of the Seventeenth Century," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, XLV (1934), 1-81.

*University of Florida*

## BOOK REVIEWS

### FOLKLORE IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

*The Hat-Shaking Dance and Other Tales From the Gold Coast.* By HAROLD COURLANDER with ALBERT KOFI PREMPEH, illustrated by ENRICO ARNO. N. Y., Harcourt Brace, c1957. 115 pp. \$2.95

*The Story Bag, a Collection of Korean Folktales.* By KIM SO-UN translated by SETSU HIGASHI, illustrated by KIM EUI-HWAN. Rutland, Vermont and Tokyo, Japan, Charles E. Tuttle Company, n.d. 229 pp. \$2.50

*Did You Feed My Cow? Rhymes and Games From City Streets and Country Lanes.* Compiled by MARGARET TAYLOR, illustrated by PAUL GALDONE. N. Y., Thomas Crowell, c1956. 86 pp. \$2.75

Of the three books here described, *The Hat-Shaking Dance* will undoubtedly yield the greatest reward to the serious student of folklore, because of the care which the compilers have taken to facilitate comparison between these tales of the Gold Coast and those of other primitive cultures. Harold Courlander has collaborated with a number of other authors in preparing collections of West African, Ethiopian, Haitian folktales. Included in the present volume are twelve pages of notes in which he reveals his extensive knowledge of the relationship of one story to another, as well as a nice discernment of the distinction between morals and manners in the stuff of which folklore is made: "Anansi the spider is the main trickster hero of the Ashanti people of the Gold Coast . . . often his actions exemplify how the small and physically weak may through shrewdness contrive to triumph over the strong. But there is no moral teaching implicit in most of his victories . . . the folk tale is not on the surface at least, a mirror of Ashanti mores . . . usually the tales begin with a formula which stresses that they are not really true."

The matter of fact style makes the stories easy for the storyteller to embroider. Of widest popular interest is the one entitled "Anansi plays dead" which is the ancestor of the tar-baby, and according to the present authors, is familiar in slightly varying forms in India, Europe, and among the North American Indians. The illustrations

throughout have the comic-grotesqueness which we associate with African figures commonly sold in gift shops.

*The Story Bag* is not of course, our first collection in English of Korean folk tales, but it deserves attention because of its unmistakable marks of authenticity. The compiler is a professional writer who says he heard the stories in his childhood and later wrote them down in Japanese. The translator is a Canadian of Japanese ancestry now living in Japan. The format suggests a book for the adult collector rather than for use with children, but the black and white illustrations are pleasing and direct in their appeal to any age. The author states his purpose to be the furthering of international understanding through emphasis on the universal qualities of the folktale. The subject matter of most of the tales is familiar—the animal who repays the human being who befriended him, the man who acquires a reputation for great wisdom by listening much and saying little, the use of familiar objects such as pumpkin seeds as instruments of magic, and the like.

The story entitled "The Bridegroom's Shopping" will inevitably be compared with the Japanese "Mirror of Matsuyama," but like "The Tiger Hunter and the Mirror" in Carpenter's *Tales of a Korean Grandmother*, it bears very slight resemblance to that loveliest of tributes to the ennobling influence of a mother and daughter relationship.

The experienced storyteller will find in both volumes retellings of a number of familiar tales which can be used in supplementing programs for children.

The author of *Did You Feed My Cow?* traces in two pages the origins of each of the five parts into which her book is divided—Call and Response, Play Party, Doorstep Chants and Rhymes, Turn Fast! Turn Slow!, Street Rhymes and Bounce Ball Games. An index of titles and one of first lines are included. Dedicated to Charlemae Rollins, a long time member of the staff of the Chicago Public Library and the first Negro to become President of the Children's Library Association, the book is obviously planned with special reference to the needs of young Negro children. The black and white sketches give evidence of an attempt to portray both white and Negro children in casual play situations, singly and in groups.

This does not in any way impair the usefulness of the book in any school or library. This reviewer has talked with two elementary school librarians who have already made use of the rhymes in kindergarten

and primary grades. Some of the rhymes are closely related to the Burl Ives versions of the same verses, others may be presumed to have been largely rewritten by Miss Taylor with only slight debt to earlier forms. The rhythm is pleasing throughout. This book is probably the one of the three which will have and will deserve, widest use with children.

LAURA K. MARTIN

*University of Kentucky*

*Jump Rope Rhymes* (1955); *Hopscotch* (1955); *Jacks* (1956); and *Who's It?* By PATRICIA EVANS. San Francisco: The Porpoise Bookshop. Each 32 pp. Paper, 25¢ each.

Patricia Evans' four little pamphlets certainly deserve mention in the review pages of a folklore journal, although they do not fit conveniently into any pigeon-hole. They are not documented; nevertheless, there is reason for supposing most of them to be authentic recordings of children games. In *Jump Rope Rhymes*, the author states that the rhymes were collected between 1945 and 1955 in the San Francisco Bay Area with the help of "Judy," and in *Hopscotch* she says the patterns and descriptions were all collected during 1955 in the same locale. Although no such statement vouchsafes for *Who's It?*, the rhymes seem again unexceptionable, but *Jacks* seems more the result of reading than of collecting from children.

From the running text (present only in *Hopscotch* and *Jacks*) it is clear that these charming pamphlets are written with didactic intentions for the consumption of children—a kind of do-it-yourself folk game kit. However, they could be quite useful to elementary teachers, playground directors, camp councillors for young children and the like. And as casual recordings of children's games by one obviously informed in matters folkloric, they should be of some interest to folklorists.

W.H.J.

*The Common Muse: An Anthology of Popular British Ballad Poetry XVth-XXth Century.* Edited by VIVIAN DE SOLA PINTO and ALLAN EDWIN RODWAY. New York: Philosophical Library, 1957. Limited edition. xii, 470 pp. \$10.00.

*The Common Muse* is an interesting and valuable anthology. In addition, perhaps not surprisingly, it is something of a hot number that a few librarians will have to consign to the "locked shelves," or whatever euphemism they may use to designate the sanitary measures used to protect the morals of their patrons. And at times, in its whimsicalities, it is a somewhat puzzling book.

Perhaps the best beginning would be an explanation of the "limited" aspect of this edition. The present edition contains the 197 "popular ballads," to accept the editors' terminology, of the regular edition as well as its very stimulating 29-page introductory essay which refers not infrequently to ballads printed only in the limited edition, a practice which should baffle the owners of the regular edition (Chatto and Windus, 1957). Appearing in the limited edition only are a one-page prefatory note, forty-four distinctly bawdy "popular ballads," two extra pages of notes, and an additional index.

Of the forty-four compositions that appear only in the limited edition, nineteen I think have never been anthologized before, coming from private broadside collections, oral sources, and the like. Of the remaining twenty-five, ten would be difficult to come by in the ordinary library, being quoted from such sources as *The Merry Muses of Caledonia*. The others come from standard sources, not always easily available at that, like J. S. Farmer and the Ballad Society reprints. This statistical exercise is warranted in that it also indicates pretty well the proportions of the sources whence the editors drew their 197 selections in the unlimited section of the book—except that in this section no use is made of oral sources, although the reader will occasionally be reminded—as the editors are—of oral analogs.

The 197 items in the main section of the volume are divided by subject matter into two great categories, "General" and "Amatory," which in turn are subdivided by subject matter again: e.g., "Crime and Punishment" under "General," and "Wise and Foolish Virgins" under "Amatory." Each subdivision seems to be arranged chronologically in accordance to the date of the appearance of the particular version used by the editors. Some forty-six of the poems are accredited to various writers, ranging from Swift, Dickens, and Parker to meaningless names like W. Corder and F.B.P. Other ascriptions are discussed in the notes. Textual difficulties are ex-

pounded in italic marginalia, which include the tags "equivocal" and "cant" to label *double entendre* which might escape a modern reader who does not know some of the lore about tinkers, beggars, and tailors.

It would be impossible in a review to give adequate representation of all the materials in this collection. The American reader may be surprised at some of the memories this anthology will stir: here are John Bunyan's "Pilgrim Song" and the shape-note "Jerusalem, My Happy Home," called a Catholic ballad; or "Johnny Sands," telling a joke that the Appalachian sings about the man who tricks his wife into drowning herself when she thinks she is drowning him; or dating from 1600, an analog of the drinking song best identified by its chorus "Which nobody can deny." Here too are some rollicking fabliaux and, rarely printed, the very funny "The Lass of Islington." Surprisingly none of these last is confined within the limited section, and for that matter, the reader may well wonder how a dozen others escaped the same confines.

For the reviewer of *The Common Muse* there remains one task, and that is to comment upon the genre being anthologized. The sub-title employs the term "popular British ballad poetry." In their introduction, the editors explicitly differentiate among three types of ballad: the "traditional ballad of the Middle Ages," the literary imitation, and a third category, which they most often term the "street ballad" and which they specifically equate with Hyder Rollins' broadside ballad. Having remarked upon the difficulty of distinguishing between the traditional and the street ballad, indeed even questioning that such a distinction exists, the editors then assert that there is a difference and seem to find that difference in the degree of sentimentality and sensationalism, while suggesting that the saving grace of the street ballad is or was "wholesome Rabelaisian comedy."

It is far from this reviewer's purpose to suggest that there is no such thing as a street or popular ballad in contradistinction to the traditional ballad. Obviously there is a street ballad—the editors of the present work give a fine history of the genre. But unless we are careful there is going to be as much difficulty in characterizing the popular ballad as there has been in describing the traditional ballad. It is this reviewer's hasty conjecture that the two types of ballad arise from the attempts of two different types of

poets (and I am tempted to put quotes around *poets*) to cater to a single audience at different periods in cultural development. I would hazard that bawdiness, although common, is certainly not a *sine qua non* to the genre. And I would also guess that if a final canon of the popular ballad is made, some of the more erudite, artificial, and satirical poems in *The Common Muse* will not be in that canon. But the very importance of *The Common Muse* is that it will afford grounds for argument about what a popular ballad is.

WM. HUGH JANSEN

*University of Kentucky*

*Bluenose Ghosts*. By HELEN CREIGHTON. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1957. xiv, 280 pp. \$4.00.

Dr. Helen Creighton's *Bluenose Ghosts* is the latest in a current little flurry of publishing collections of local legends—the latest and the best yet: thorough, reliable, and interesting. Noteworthy, in that flurry it is one of the few published as a trade book by a commercial house.

The stories, a couple of hundred or more, in *Bluenose Ghosts* first came to Miss Creighton as incidental by-products of her folksong-collecting, but evidently and eventually became a main objective of field collection in their own right. They were gathered from cities, towns, and tiny villages all over Miss Creighton's well-beloved native Nova Scotia. In this volume they are classified under eleven different headings, some of which indicate the function such as served by the belief-tale (*i.e.*, warnings and predictions) while others indicate the nature of the material within the tale (*i.e.* devils, poltergeists, phantom ships), with the latter basis of classification being predominant.

The informants supplying the narratives come from all walks of life. Usually they are identified by name and place of residence; but, far more important, frequently a full and artistic description is given of the informant, his environment, and his attitudes towards the particular narrative. This last, with belief-tales, is particularly significant and intriguing. Often, as Miss Creighton points out, the tales were told very hesitantly, almost in confidence, for these informants were not telling "scary" tales but true belief-tales: Miss Creighton wonders,

with justification, "how many people have seen or heard things which they have kept locked in their own hearts for fear that the telling of them might result in their being ridiculed or misunderstood." (P. 80.)

Miss Creighton's attitude toward her informants is sympathetic, affectionate even, and understanding, and her attitude toward their tales is much the same. As have so many other people, Miss Creighton has had personal experiences that have made her less than a skeptic about belief-tales. Of the tales in her book, she says, "The people who told the stories were convinced they had happened. . . ." And, "Some are the result of imagination, superstition, and fear, but there are many others whose authenticity cannot be questioned." In weighting this authenticity, Miss Creighton considers "the integrity of the informant, if he is temperate in his habits, and how much his outlook upon life has been coloured by a superstitious environment." (Pp. x and xi.)

Such an attitude of sympathy toward both informant and tale seems to this reviewer more justifiable than it may seem at first glance to some mundane souls—and it certainly adds immeasurably to the charm and to the accuracy of the representation of the folk. Dr. Creighton disclaims any psychic research or debate; instead she is interested in the tales *per se*, and such an interest is excellently served by her attitude. Further, this attitude lends considerable authority to her other observations about this particular narrative genre: e.g. "a true ghost story is nearly always short"; among ghost stories, the sub-category concerning devils is particularly "horrible"; there may be trouble in distinguishing between the authentic and the "concocted" tales told by the same experienced teller; and so on.

This is a trade book, and an excellent one, aimed at a popular audience; yet it will serve and stimulate folklorists much better than many a footnoted tome. Miss Creighton is so proven a field researcher that we hardly need her assurance that all of her tales come from oral sources and that many are in the exact words of the tellers. Two appendices would have been enormously helpful to the scholar: an index of the tellers and their stories so as to represent their repertoires and an index either of the tales themselves or, better, of the most prominent motifs such as the ineradicable bloodstain, the bleeding corpse that identifies its slayer, the black dog ghost, the unwise oath, the self-rocking cradle, and so on. But perhaps graduate students will one day be making these indices.

One final virtue of *Bluenose Ghosts* cannot go unmentioned. The volume offers wonderful evidence as to the charm and significance of place names. The natural concern of Nova Scotians with the sea appears in scores of such names as Devil's Battery, Clam Harbour, Ballas Cove, Shut In Island, Bay Head, Winging Point, South East Passage, Digby Neck, and Goose Gutter. Layers of languages, history, and immigration show through such names as North Port Mouton, Portuguese Cove, Chebucto Head, Aspatogan, East Chezzetcook, Head Jeddore, Middle Musquodoboit, Tatamagouche, Upper Tantallon, Ingonish, Pugwash, and Slios a Bhrchan.

In brief, it is a fascinating book, and a very useful one.

WM. HUGH JANSEN

*University of Kentucky*

*Logging with Paul Bunyan.* By JOHN D. ROBINS. Edited by EDITH FOWKE. Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1957. xvii, 97 pp. \$3.00

Dr. John D. Robins, whose stories appear in *Logging With Paul Bunyan*, was professor of English at Victoria College, Toronto University. He was venerated by his students not for his teaching alone, but also for his keen sense of humour. Nobody relished a good story more than he did, and his tales lost nothing in the telling. In fact they were enjoyed so much that he gave a series over the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's network, using the pseudonym of Ed Mandeville, in 1951. After his death these were gathered together by Edith Fowke who had known him well through their mutual interest in folk songs. She has only made what changes were necessary for the sake of clarity, for the stories were written out sometimes as radio scripts, and in other cases as magazine articles. His own vigorous style is maintained throughout. Mrs. Fowke feels that the written word cannot convey the full enjoyment of the stories as they came from him, and she herself finds it difficult to disassociate them from the narrator. Nevertheless for those who must read instead of listen, the tales as they appear here are full of zest and imagination. They deal with Paul's activities in Canada and make entertaining reading for the lover of tall stories.

In the Foreword Mrs. Fowke goes into the origin of the famous logger and discusses the various theories about what country produced

him. The matter remains unsolved, but the discussion gives room for thought. Tales about him were current in Northern Ontario between 1900 and 1907, and he was also the subject of stories in the New Brunswick lumber woods at that same period. Manitoba knew him, and so did Nova Scotia, although Paul Bunyan stories are rare in the latter province today.

The first story describes his birth and the reason why he and his ox grew to their tremendous size. There are ten chapters in all, and they include The Winter of the Big Snow, The Crooked Tote Road, and The Big Griddle. These were the tales common in Dr. Robins' younger days and are quite different from the later Paul who went west and got mixed up with wheat farming, cattle ranches, and so forth. Of the cradle made of twenty acres of white oak it is said, "With the stumps an' everything there wasn't room for it to rock on the Bunyan place. So they took up a perscription an' the Gover'ment helped some an' Queen Victoria heerd about it an' sent over ten thousand pounds, shillin's an' pence, an' took a second mortgage, an' they made a six-mile chain an' fastened the cradle to Blowmedown Mountain with it an' put the cradle out in the Atlantic Ocean. Then they anchored a cloud to the cradle to keep the sun out of Paul's eyes."

The book has a freshness which has been infused by Dr. Robins' happy spirit, and it is a welcome addition to the saga of that great woodsman, Paul Bunyan.

HELEN CREIGHTON

*National Museum of Canada*

*The Folklore of Maine.* By HORACE P. BECK. Philadelphia and New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1957. 284 pp. \$5.00

The regional folklorist faces a trying problem in the organization and presentation of his material for a book. Should he present it segregated tightly into the traditional categories—ballads and songs, beliefs and superstitions, legends and folk tales, medicine, arts and crafts, etc.—he will offer the reader a great deal of knowledge about folklore, but little or nothing about the cultural unity of a region. If he organizes his material around the cycle of life of a human being who lives and dies in a particular setting—pre-natal lore, birth and childhood, adolescence, courtship and marriage, adult life, death and burial,

and life after death—then he will illuminate the mass media from which regional personalities are formed, but the traditional categories of folklore will have vanished and little will have been said about the life of groups, or about institutions and economic life. Finally, if he builds the framework of his book around the manifestations of the enterprises upon which the lives of the folk of the region converge, then he will have left serious gaps in the two areas already mentioned.

Beck follows this latter pattern. He sees in Maine a culture of the sea and the shore-line essentially, with lumbering as an inland activity which is dependent upon the sea and which receives its lore from men of the sea. Each chapter is a delightful potpourri which begins with the facts of economic and social life as they evolved in their historical setting, to culminate in the material culture, the language and sayings, the beliefs and superstitions, and the songs and stories which these phenomena have produced. The tone of lived experience is felt everywhere. One is convinced that Mr. Beck has known and experienced the life of the coastal folk of Maine with all of the intimacy and insight which foment both intellectual and emotional attachments.

The depth to which the author has penetrated into the areas of folklore which have interested him is beyond question. Although sources are not always clear, one gains everywhere the impression of scholarly accuracy and rigorous fidelity to both historical and folkloric data. The lack of specific biographical citations may annoy the scholar, although it increases the readability of the work. The index is not analytical and lacks many important entries concerning which significant data are to be found in the text.

The feeling is produced that the author has been more interested in the lore of the male population of his area than in that of the women. A great deal more might have been said about women's social and recreational life, their arts and crafts, their domestic activities, and about the effects on their moods, thoughts, and activities of the long absences and hazards of life endured by their seafaring men folk.

The author presumes too much about the seafaring lore of his readers. Being an entrenched landsman, I find it impossible to visualize the numerous types of coastal and sea-going craft, the nets and traps for catching fish, and the many other items which form a rich store of the folklore of material culture. This might have been avoided, at least in part, by appropriate illustrations. The book contains the

texts of many folk songs, although melodies accompany only a few of them.

Chapter 2, "John Josselyn, 'Gent'" gives a digest of an early folklorist's remarkable observations in Maine in mid-seventeenth century. The brief but rich treatment by Beck suggests that this early American document deserves a scholarly twentieth century edition.

If this review seems condemnatory I hasten to rectify. *The Folklore of Maine* is, despite the limitations noted, one of the finest works on regional folklore yet produced in the United States. Beck pays more than lip-service to the concept of "region," and he has elucidated what he finds to be the most significant regional phenomena of Maine with warmth and insight.

AUSTIN E. FIFE

*Occidental College*

*The Mexican Corrido as a Source for Interpretive Study of Modern Mexico (1870-1950).* By MERLE E. SIMMONS. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Publications: Humanities Series No. 38, 1957. xviii, 619 pp. \$10.00.

Rarely does a student of folklore, or any other area, for that matter, go as deeply and as thoroughly into his subject as does Merle Simmons. The book shows that there has been long and careful study of the *corrido* throughout its history in Mexico. As one reads he becomes more and more aware that the author knows and feels whereof he writes.

Students of Mexican literature and folklore know the importance of the *corrido*, as do musicians and sociologists, and even the many tourists from the United States who have had a passing acquaintance with it. The *corrido* is not easy to overlook. This reviewer has noted that on conducted tours through the country tour directors are as anxious to include the *corridista* as the sights. Picnickers feel the need for him as they do for the *enchiladas* and the *tamales*.

In spite of this interest in the *corrido* there is no definition that satisfies every one. Perhaps Simmons has defined it as well as it can be defined. "It may be a simple narrative ballad which relates an event of interest to only a small region; it may be a song with a love theme and lyric overtones, although these are characteristically subordinated to the narrative element as the minstrel sings of his amorous

adventures; or it may become a narrative with strong epic flavor if the singer chooses to report an incident which concerns some heroic figure, be he bandit, general, or president."

There can be no doubt that the *corrido* came to Mexico with the Spanish *conquistadores*, but once on the soil of the New World, it developed certain characteristics of its own, and must therefore be thought of as more than a mere outgrowth of Spain's *romance* or ballad. Simmons traces this history. He shows, too, in a rather novel approach to the study of a literary or folkloristic genre, that the *corrido* has served the Mexican *pueblo* in a number of ways: for entertainment and recreation; for the oral recording of history, as well as the written; as a kind of news report of important, or of not so important events; as a weapon of propaganda powerful enough to incite a population to riot or to tear down the reputation of some powerful *caudillo*.

In the course of the study the author evaluates the part played by *corrido* in the Mexican scene today and shows how it affected the history of the country. Such an interpretation demanded a rather lengthy presentation of Mexican history, especially of the period embraced by the years 1870-1950. Simmons undertakes to present this history as he studies the *corrido*; but he points out clearly that his study of the *corrido* shows us Mexican history, not necessarily as it happened, but as the Mexican people, the folk, believed it happened.

The book is divided into four main parts: background; Revolutionary Personalities; Revolutionary Ideology; Relations with Foreigners. Each of these is a detailed study in itself. Each is based upon genuine *corridos*, and whenever possible, which was in a great many cases, Simmons used the broadsides printed and sold everywhere. There is, by the way, a fairly large corpus of these to be studied, and apparently all the known examples have been studied by the author.

In an Appendix Simmons presents a small collection of representative texts of *corridos* of several types and from different periods, endeavoring to offer those not generally found in anthologies. Notes (115 pages of them) provide very adequate documentation for the book. Last, but not least, appears a lengthy and valuable bibliography and a complete index of all collected *corridos*.

*The Mexican Corrido* by Merle E. Simmons will no doubt stand as the definite study of this genre of folk poetry for a long time.

JOHN E. KELLER

University of North Carolina

*The Trickster: A Study in American Mythology*, By PAUL RADIN.

With Commentaries by KARL KERÉNYI and C. G. JUNG. New York:  
Philosophical Library, 1956. 211 pp. \$4.75

In this small volume Paul Radin, widely known anthropologist and a lifelong student of the Winnebago Indians, presents, in English translation only, the Trickster cycle of the Winnebago; a supplementary Winnebago collection, the Hare cycle; and summaries of two other American Indian Trickster cycles Assiniboine and Tlingit. Following the presentation of this primary material Radin discusses the nature and meaning of the Winnebago material. The remainder of his book consists of two short chapters, one by Karl Kerényi and the other by C. G. Jung, on "The Trickster in Relation to Greek Mythology" and "On the Psychology of the Trickster Figure."

A brief but thoughtful prefatory note by Radin indicates that for him trickster myths "belong to the oldest expressions of mankind" (p. ix) and that these myths, as found among North American Indians, represent the "earliest and most archaic form" of a theme which has had "a special and permanent appeal and an unusual attraction for mankind from the very beginnings of civilization" (*idem*). This may or may not be true (no proof is offered); if true then we have, in North American versions of the Trickster cycle, the earliest "answer, or the adumbration of an answer, to questions forced on [man], consciously or unconsciously, since his appearance on earth. . . an archaic *speculum mentis*" (p. x; see also p. 168).

With such a premise, it becomes clear why Radin included, for comparative purposes, not only a summary of the Assiniboine trickster cycle (the Assiniboine and the Winnebago both being Siouan-speaking peoples), but also a summary of the Tlingit Trickster cycle. (The Tlingits are North Pacific Coast Indians, linguistically unrelated to Siouan peoples and geographically remote from them.) In including the Tlingit cycle in summary Radin was apparently seeking to demonstrate the basic similarity of all North American Indian trickster cycles as forms of archaic philosophizing.

But Radin is too good an historian and anthropologist to be interested only in "beginnings" or "firsts," no matter how much these have always intrigued him. He also insists that the Winnebago Trickster myths, or any other North American Indian Trickster myths, can only be properly and fully understood by study of these myths "in

their specific cultural environments and in their historical settings" (p. x). To this end he has appended an enlightening series of notes explaining cultural allusions, etc., made in the Trickster myths (pp. 54-60), and for the Hare cycle he has done the same thing. Supplementing, in a sense, this notational material is an important chapter in which Radin details how he obtained the Winnebago texts offered in the present volume; other matters discussed in this chapter are Winnebago history and culture, Winnebago mythology and literary tradition, a characterization of the Winnebago Trickster, the attitudes of the Winnebago toward their Trickster, the satiric nature of the Trickster cycle, and the Winnebago cycle in relation to other North American Trickster cycles. This chapter is probably the most valuable chapter in the book, representing as it does the most recent of numerous attempts which have been made to explain that extremely puzzling, contradictory character known as "Trickster."

In his essay on "The Trickster in Relation to Greek Mythology" Kerényi accepts trickster tales as "a species of the genus mythology" (p. 175), but posits (in disagreement with Radin) that the Winnebago material stands close to the end form, rather than representing a beginning, of an archaic expression (p. 177). From the Winnebago Trickster to Hermes seems on the whole too great a jump to make with any great ease within the limits of a brief essay; Kerényi's chapter, while interesting, is on the whole inconclusive. The same criticism can be made of C. G. Jung's short "commentary" on "The Psychology of the Trickster Figure." Both Kerényi and Jung evidently had some hesitancy in attempting to contribute, under severe limitations of space, to Radin's work, and partly because of these limitations both scholars' chapters are fairly difficult to follow.

ERMINIE WHEELER-VOEGELIN

*Indiana University*

*The Ballad of Tradition.* By GORDON HALL GEROULD. New York: Oxford University Press, 1957. Galaxy Book no. 8. viii, 311 pp. \$2.95.

It hardly seems a quarter-century since *The Ballad of Tradition* first appeared, an urbane, courteous, profoundly learned book analyzing and systematizing the theories about the ballad advanced before

1932. No student of the ballad needs to be reminded of its monumental significance in ballad scholarship. The theories modestly stated, and capably defended, about the origin of both the form and the narrative style of ballads remain seductively interesting and exciting. The ideas gently—more or less—attacked remain utterly demolished.

Every student, scholar, and teacher of the ballad will welcome the reprinting of *The Ballad of Tradition*, although they may be struck, as this reviewer was, by the anomaly of the price connotations in the term *paperback edition* and of the price tag on this particular paperback. What better commentary on the cost of publication? But one lamentable dereliction is not condoned by the cost of publication. In 1932 *The Ballad of Tradition* contained a first-rate selective bibliography. In 1957 it bears the same selective bibliography; surely in twenty-five years something has happened in ballad scholarship. A number of names occur immediately to whom Oxford could have resorted for updating of the bibliography: to name but a few, in alphabetical order, Coffin, Laws, Richmond, and Wilgus. Still, those interested in the ballad must be pleased to have Gerould's masterpiece again in print.

W.H.J.

*Boston Ways: High, By, and Folk.* By GEORGE F. WESTON, JR.  
Boston: Beacon Press, 1957. xvi, 261, v pp. \$5.00.

The folkways of this tricksy title are not, as the wary folklorist might fear, totally absent. They are not, of course, for this is not a scholarly book, recorded in a form particularly useful to a folklorist: the only authorities acknowledged are one bank and two Chambers of Commerce, other than casual citations in the text.

But there is a great deal of folklore here, in a semi-historical, semi-literary form: legends about the Bostonians of all times and levels, legends about famous visitors, accounts of sports (ratting, for instance, and the invention of football) and sporting, accounts of folk crafts, descriptions of enclaves, the origins of place names, and much, much more.

*Boston Ways* is pleasantly and lovingly written. Mr. Weston obviously knows and loves his subject. And the book is generously illustrated with informative photographs. If the reader suffers a nostal-

gia for Boston, or if he can't understand people who have such a nostalgia, then let him read *Boston Ways*.

W.H.J.

*Fear: Contagion and Conquest*. By JAMES CLARK MOLONEY. New York: Philosophical Library, 1957. xiv, 140 pp. \$3.75.

Indirectly Doctor Moloney's book should interest folklorists on two issues: 1, its all out attack upon social scientists who undertake to analyze human culture without first studying thoroughly "human anatomy, human physiology, human pathology, and, above all, . . . human psychology"; and 2, its psycho-analytical method of explaining certain group characteristics. The book touches not at all upon folklore, but it does discuss groups of interest to folklorists. Since group characteristics are frequently reflected in folklore, folklorists should be, at least, aware of the psycho-analytic approach to determining the genesis of such characteristics.

W.H.J.

*Georgia Scenes: Characters, Incidents, &c., in the First Half Century of the Republic*. By A. B. LONGSTREET. New York: Sagamore Press, 1957. American Century Series. x, 198 pp. \$1.25.

First published in 1835, last reprinted in 1897, *Georgia Scenes* has been frequently anthologized in what readers of the present paperback volume may now consider to have been extremely meager portions. The importance of *Georgia Scenes* in this history of American local color and humor is summed up in B. R. McElderry's six-page introduction, which also supplies a handy bibliographical note. But, except by inference, little is said about the tremendous value of Longstreet's work as a reflection of the folkways and folklore of another century.

Of course, Longstreet did not intend to record folklore but, instead, was being creatively literary, probably influenced by the Eighteenth Century's familiar essays. Happily, for the folklorist, the book's most literary moments are its weakest ones while its great strength lies in its reproductions of folk speech, folk repartee, traditional rural activities and attitudes, and the like. Indeed it is an excellent example of the appearance of folklore in literature—all the more valuable

to the folklorist because it affords the only record of the particular folklore of its specific moment and place. Folklorists, particularly those who teach, should be grateful that *Georgia Scenes* has been added to the slowly growing list of reprinted folklore "source materials."

W.H.J.

*Pictorial History of Protestantism: A Panoramic View of Western Europe and the United States.* By VERGILIUS FERM. New York: Philosophical Library, 1957. xiv, 368 pp. \$10.00

The receipt of such a work baffles the book-review editors of folklore journals. Essentially the *Pictorial History of Protestantism* is an excursion into cultural history rather than into folklore. It represents a prolific scholar's attempt to prepare a respectable text to accompany a magnificent collection of pictures, mainly photographs, the whole intended for the lay public. It achieves its purpose very well.

Its major offerings to the folklorist consist of: the reproduction of a number of rare cuts depicting martyrdoms, peasant scenes of the middle Ages, and American frontier scenes; the recounting of some folk religious practices and of some religious legends; and the reproduction of some fine photographs of religious ceremonies among the so-called fundamentalists and evangelicals (a number of these pictures seem not to have appeared previously in book publications). All of the material of direct folkloric interest, however, occupies but a small proportion of this weighty tome.

W.H.J.

*Terrapin's Pot of Sense.* By HAROLD COURLANDER. Illustrated by ELTON FAX. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1957. 125 pp. \$3.00.

Harold Courlander's *Terrapin's Pot of Sense* includes thirty folk tales and one peculiar brief recitation which seems to a combination of a stanza from a play party song (it may, as Mr. Courlander hazards, be a riddle, but I would guess that the original teller capitalized upon its resemblance to a riddle) with a bit of moralizing about the inscrutable providence in weather. To all this are appended eleven pages of determinedly informal notes.

No one could read the narratives without great enjoyment or without the inevitable comparisons to other collections of American Negro tales, in many of which comparisons Mr. Courlander will come off very well. But a folklorist will also see that when the demands of a popular audience conflicted with those of the folklorist, it was the latter which were compromised.

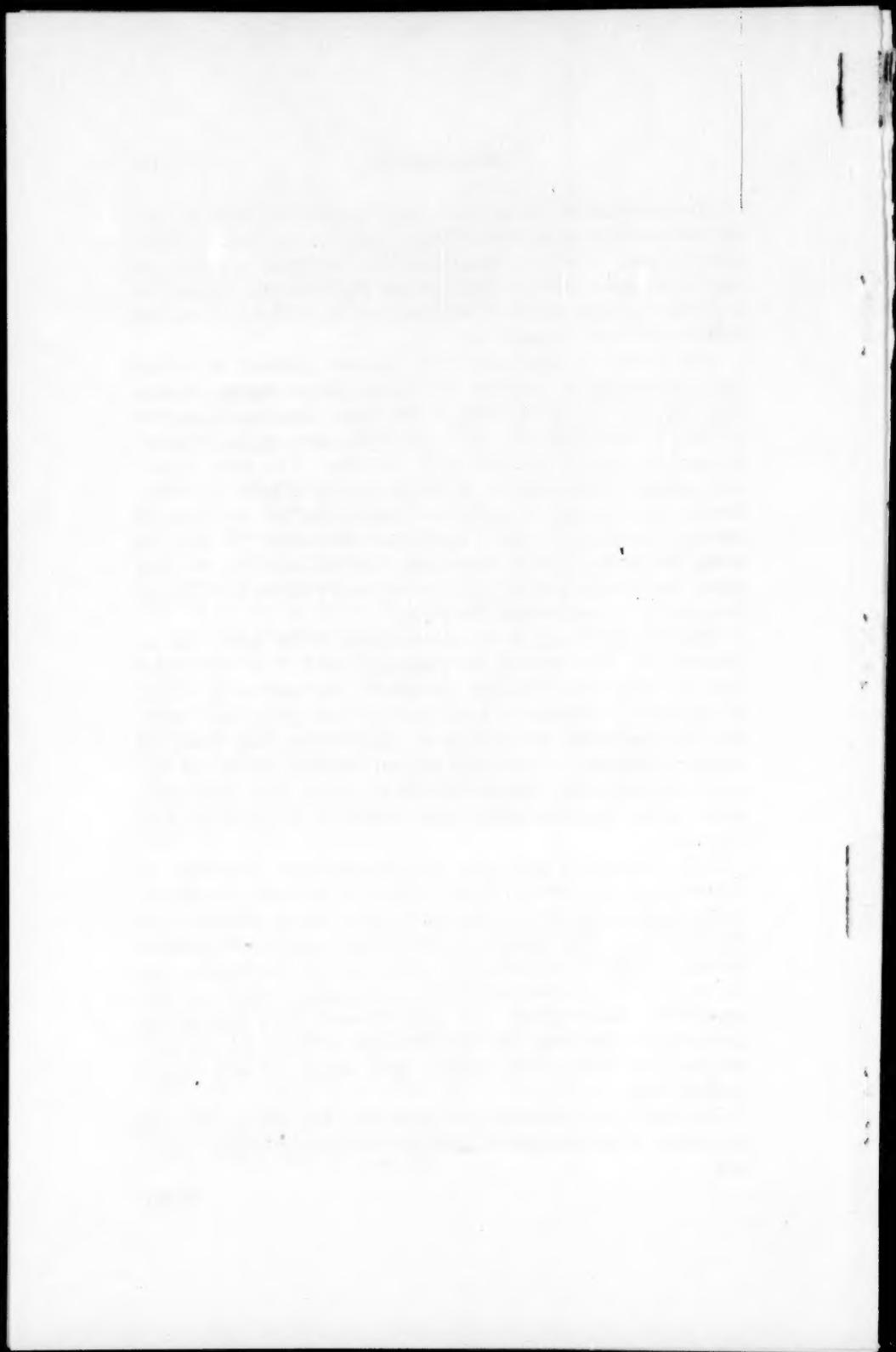
The nature of this compromise becomes apparent in various spots, particularly in the notes, and causes various degrees of vexation. In describing his handling of the always troublesome problem of dialect, Mr. Courlander states that, while avoiding the "quaint," he has been "faithful in spirit to the originals." This tenet is probably unexceptionable, and his actual practice of it seems successful, but in the very next paragraph, he asserts that he has "tried to eliminate some of the more conspicuous differences" in order to create the illusion that the tales were "told originally by the same person"—a practice that is bound to win more plaudits from literary reviewers than from folkloric reviewers.

Most vexing though is the documentation of the tales. The informants are listed in a single paragraph, where it is also stated that the tales were collected (presumably by mechanical means, though this is not clear) in rural Alabama, New Jersey, and Michigan. However when one turns to the specific notes, they reveal the informant and place of collection for only three or four of the versions here presented, although fantastically those same notes sometimes identify the places where *other* versions of the same tale were collected!

Mr. Courlander's vast and not-to-be-questioned knowledge of folktales in general and of Negro folklore in particular occasionally bursts resplendently through the casual notes, but at other moments the clouds are thick indeed: in one instance, Gulla and Georgian versions are cited in a footnote to a tale, although the footnote does not mention that the tale presented is a fascinating form of the universal "The Master Thief." In short, it would have been almost better to omit the notes, for their inclusion serves to vex the folklorist and to bemuse the layman, upon whom the note-maker's eye was fixed.

But the texts themselves are fascinating and convey the aura of folklore if not the specific styles of their several original narrators.

W.H.J.





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